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ABSTRACT

These guidelines have been designed to support and upgrade English as a field of study and to suggest certain standards, approaches, and materials that will strengthen junior and senior high school English departments. The guidelines deal with several areas that have relevance for English instruction: philosophy; curriculum and instruction (general matters and specific skill areas); teacher working conditions; desirable support services; department chair (selection and duties); department operation; departmental budget; policies regarding controversial matters; and teachers' professional growth and participation in professional organizations. An appendix lists books that may be helpful in the development of the English curriculum. (GW)

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JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT EVALUATION GUIDELINES

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JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Introduction

The enculturation of American youth demands a practical knowledge of the English language. It suggests a basic understanding of the literary and grammatical components of the language which help to perpetuate the culture as well as to aid individuals to become functional, literate beings within that culture.

The study of English in the American school system has long been a point of controversy for the American public. No one is more sensitive to this than those individuals with a specific interest in English as a field of study. However, no program as a field of study, if it is to be one of relevance and viability, can operate effectively for very long or to any substantial degree without certain acceptable principles by which to evaluate that program.

The following guidelines have been formulated with these ideas in mind. Specifically, these guidelines have been developed for teachers of English in the junior and senior high schools. Better yet, they are presented here for anyone who wishes to take a closer look at the field of English as it is presented in our local schools. They are designed for the purpose of bolstering, supporting, and up-grading English as a field of study, prescribing and suggesting certain standards, approaches, and materials that will strengthen departments of English in any junior and senior high school system.

It is hoped that these guidelines will assist teachers of English to look at their own departments candidly and realistically. It is hoped that school administrators will see relevance and continuity in the development of local English programs. Further, it is hoped that these guidelines will serve accreditation committees to make sound and knowledgeable judgments

concerning English programs in the schools of our communities.

These guidelines have been developed and are hereby presented by a sub-committee composed of junior and senior high school English teachers appointed in 1974 by the Board of the Central California Council of Teachers of English. Numerous suggestions, presentations and revisions have been an integral part of their development and are presented here as the culmination of much discussion, input, and thought. To facilitate a comprehensive review of these guidelines as they could relate to any single department of English, a guideline checklist is included. The sub-committee wishes to thank the many teachers, department chairpersons, and administrators from both Southern and Northern California who made suggestions and pertinent criticisms of the guidelines as they were being developed. It wishes to thank especially those teachers who worked on the original draft at Asilomar '74, specifically: Robert Beck (CATE President, 1974-1976), Valda Holleman Carter, John Hedberg, Dorris C. Holmes, Mrs. B. J. Hunt, Kathleen Juarez, Bud Robbins, and Corrine Thwing.

The responsibilities for various aspects of an English department's operation are shared with school and district administrations. The guidelines take this shared responsibility into consideration. But education is not static. The needs of youth in our communities change as the needs of those communities change. It will be necessary to up-date these guidelines periodically in order for them to serve as relevant and functional principles. Meanwhile, we hope many colleagues, school districts, and accreditation committees will find them useful. The sub-committee is grateful to the many teachers and friends of English who helped to write them.

CATE Commission on Secondary English/English Department Chairpeople:

Dorothy Dresden
Norma Kohout (Head, CCTE Committee of Department Chairmen, 1975-76)
Richard Latimer (Commission Chairperson, 1974-75)
Charles Pelton (Head, CCTE Committee of Department Chairmen, 1973-75)
Anthony Pruitt

I. PHILOSOPHY. There should be:

A. a written philosophy for the English department that considers the school philosophy, teachers' views, student and community needs,
B. direct involvement of the teachers within the department in developing this philosophy and updating it periodically.
C. an English program that implements the department philosophy.

II. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

A. General

1. The school should provide a clearly articulated English program which results from the department's philosophy and which regularly is reviewed.
2. The English curriculum should be clearly stated in written form.
3. The English department's curriculum (i.e., course offerings, standardized testing, etc.) should not be wholly determined by administrative or legislative mandate. It should be largely determined by teachers.
4. Each course should have a clear statement of curriculum objectives. Students should be made aware of these objectives and of their own progress toward achieving them.
5. The curriculum should provide the student with some choices in the selection of classes.
6. The members of the department should determine the basis for student grouping in English at the school (i.e., past achievement, test scores, heterogeneous grouping). (When were the department's student grouping practices last examined, and by whom?)
7. Courses should reflect the department's and the individual teacher's curriculum objectives.
8. Course descriptions should include a variety of teaching strategies, possible readings, and types of assignments.
9. If drama, speech, and journalism are offered through a department other than English, liaison between the departments should take place.
10. All teachers should be teachers of reading and writing.

B. Specifics

1. Language. The program should:
   a. include study of word meanings and origins.
   b. provide instruction in semantic awareness.
   c. provide instruction in the historical development of the English language.
   d. foster awareness of and understanding of levels of English usage.
   e. foster awareness of and understanding of dialectal English.
   f. closely relate the teaching of grammar to the teaching of writing (if the program includes instruction in grammar).

2. Thinking Skills. The program should include instruction in such skills as:
   a. categorizing;
   b. reasoning (general to specific; specific to general);
   c. recognizing the main idea;
   d. outlining.

3. Literature. The program should:
   a. provide instruction in various genres.
   b. provide exposure to literature of various cultures.
   c. acknowledge that literature of various periods has relevance today.
   d. include selections reflecting experiences unfamiliar to students as well as ones more closely related to their present lives.
   e. include literary selections chosen by students as well as ones chosen by teachers.
   f. include selections that focus on the roles of women in society.

4. Writing. The program should:
   a. emphasize sentence construction and paragraph development.
   b. include instruction in various types of writing (i.e., expository, descriptive, narrative, journalistic) and emphasize creativity of expression in prose and verse.
   c. teach students how to write from different points of view for a variety of audiences (including ones beyond the classroom).
   d. focus attention on mechanics (capitalization, spelling, punctuation), syntax, usage, and diction.
   e. include some writing generated by the literature being studied, some related to students' experience, and some designed to meet vocational as well as academic demands.
   f. strive for a balance between writing topics assigned by teachers and topics chosen by students.
   g. include opportunities for remedial work in writing.

5. Reading. The department should provide:
   a. a remedial reading program.
   b. a developmental reading program.
   c. study skills instruction (i.e., skimming and scanning, outlining, proofreading).
   d. a classroom library (including books not assigned as class texts) for each English classroom.
   e. opportunities for all members of the department to take some responsibility for the quality of the school library materials for English.

6. Listening and Speaking. The program should provide:
   a. instruction in the basic language processes of listening and speaking.
   b. opportunities to develop fluency and facility in many speaking styles appropriate to audience and context.
   c. experiences in interrelating the processes of speaking, listening, acting, writing, and reading.
   d. experiences in partner, small group, and large group discussion activities including brainstorming, consensus, open-ended, and problem-solving activities.
   e. oral language activities including choral reading, readers' theater, oral composition, debate, reporting, interviewing, questioning, and interpreting.

7. Drama, Communications, and Media. The program should provide:
   a. some integration of drama class activities with other English courses,
   b. emphasis on a student-centered process rather than on a class production.
   c. instruction in media, including journalism, film, television, and radio.
   d. opportunities for students to achieve media literacy.
   e. opportunities for students to exercise First Amendment rights responsibly through student media.

III. TEACHER WORKING CONDITIONS. Both administrators and department members should be aware:

A. of the NTCE recommendation that most English teachers be assigned not more than 100 students per day. (See appendix listing of NCTE booklet Workload for English Teachers: Policy and Procedure).
B. that the number of teaching preparations should be a reasonable one.
C. that teacher preferences and skills should be considered in determining teacher assignments.
D. that a stipend and/or additional preparation time should be provided for special production activities, i.e., speech, drama, yearbook, journalism.
E. that, except for emergencies, teachers should receive adequate advance notice of teaching assignments for the up-coming semester.
F. that a classroom should be provided for each full time English teacher.

IV. SUPPORT SERVICES. The department should have:

A. at least one paid staff clerk to assist in the clerical operation of the department.
B. a reader program provided for teachers of composition.
C. departmental orientation and continuing support for teachers new to the department.
D. an English department office.
E. adequate reference materials dealing with different aspects of the teaching of English readily available for use.
F. in the department office adequate equipment such as typewriters and a duplicating machine for teachers' use.
G. classroom areas suitable to teaching activities.
H. the elements of a good physical environment provided for each classroom: adequate furniture, lighting, acoustics, and room temperature.
I. sufficient classrooms to accommodate the demands of the department's schedule.
J. adequate departmental space provided for textbook and materials storage.
K. for the classroom teacher a sufficient number of books, materials, and equipment, including a classroom set of dictionaries and other necessary reference materials.

V. DEPARTMENT CHAIR

A. There should be:

1. criteria used in the selection of the department leader.
2. involvement of department staff members in the selection and retention of the department leader.

B. The department leader should:

1. assume an active leadership role in the operation of the department.
2. have a major role in the selection of teachers.
3. have a major role in assigning teachers.
4. have a major role in the evaluation of teachers according to established criteria.
5. have a major role in curriculum development.
6. have a major role in the selection of course offerings.
7. encourage planning between teachers and librarians.
8. encourage teachers to be involved in district-wide curriculum development.
9. encourage teachers to utilize the resources and services of the school library in designing their courses and study units.
10. actively promote articulation with feeder schools and, as appropriate, post-level schools.
11. encourage teachers to work together to develop and share curriculum materials.

C. The department leader should receive:

1. released time based on the ratio of English classes or English teachers in the department.
2. a stipend reflecting the number of teachers and class sections in the department.

VI. DEPARTMENT OPERATION. The department should:

A. in the selection of books and materials, have a balance between the needs of the department on the one hand and those of the individual teacher on the other.
B. provide adequate time (released time, minimum days, in-service time, etc.) for teachers to select textbooks and related materials prior to department adoption and/or purchase.
C. provide adequate notice of deadlines for department-assigned tasks.
D. have released time to develop curriculum materials for the department and/or to learn how to administer district or school-mandated tests.
E. encourage teachers to share curriculum materials and provide working conditions that in fact permit them to do so.
F. hold regularly scheduled department meetings, or at least provide for the department chairperson and/or individual teachers to call department meetings to discuss important concerns.
G. explain and advocate the English program to the community.
H. provide opportunities for English department personnel to grow professionally through inter- or intra-district visits, conferences and workshops, and district-sponsored in-service training.
I. provide opportunities for student field trips.

VII. DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET. There should be:

A. a departmental budget adequate for the needs of the department as understood by members of the department.
B. a policy whereby department funds are added to the succeeding year's departmental budgetary allotment.
C. reasonable access to the English department budget by English teachers.
D. immediate cash resources available to teachers for timely, necessary purchases.
E. adequate budgetary allotments for conference attendance.
F. adequate budgetary allotments for field trips, film rentals, audio-visual aids, etc.

VIII. CONTROVERSIAL MATTERS.

A. English teachers as recognized professionals should have the freedom to select their own books and materials to meet the needs of their individual teaching assignments.
B. There should be a departmentally-developed policy or format by which controversial matters can be resolved in an educationally sound manner.
C. There should be a district policy for dealing with citizens' complaints about books and materials, and all teachers should be aware of the policy.
D. Department members and administration should be aware of NCTE guidelines on controversial matters. (See appendix listing of NCTE pamphlet The Student's Right to Read).

IX. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

A. Department members should:

1. keep informed of current developments in the field of English and education generally.
2. belong to and participate in the activities of the professional subject-matter organizations (the regional English council, CATE, NCTE, etc.)

B. The department leader should:

1. take definite steps to grow professionally and to generate professional growth within the department.
2. belong to and be involved in professional subject-matter organizations including NCTE's Conference of Secondary School English Department Chairmen.

APPENDIX

Except as noted otherwise, all books listed below are available from the Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801

Uses, Abuses and Misuses of Standardized Tests, Robert Beck. NCTE, 1974.

A Check List for Evaluating the English Program in the Junior and Senior High School, Dwight L. Burton, NCTE, 1962.

Students' Right to Their Own Language, Melvin A. Butler, NCTE, 1974 (Fall 1974 issue of College Composition and Communication).

Effective School Department Heads, Michael Callahan, Prentice Hall, 1971.

Growth Through English, John Dixon, NCTE, 1967.

Censorship and the English Teacher, Kenneth Donelson, editor, NCTE, 1969.

The Students' Right to Read, Kenneth Donelson, editor, NCTE, 1972.

English for the Junior High Years, Stephen Dunning, editor, NCTE, 1969.

Meeting Censorship in the School, John Hove, NCTE, 1967.

Criteria for Evaluating High School English Programs, Paul H. Jacobs, NCTE, 1968.

Workload for English Teachers: Policy and Procedure, Henry B. Maloney, NCTE, 1973.

The Uses of English, Herbert J. Muller, NCTE, 1967.

The Rights of Teachers: The Basic ACLU Guide to a Teacher's Constitutional Rights, David Rubin, NCTE, 1972.

High School English Instruction Today: The National Study of High School English Programs, James R. Squire and Roger K. Applebee, NCTE, 1968.

CSSEDC Eighteen Recommendations for Secondary School English Departments, Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairmen, NCTE.

Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English, English Teacher Preparation Study, NCTE, 1967.

English Language Arts Framework, Dr. Alice Scofield, Chairperson, Framework Committee, State of California Department of Education, Sacramento, CA, 1975.